Russia's Refusal to Supply Arms to Pakistan

2475. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the statement made by Russian Prime Minister which appeared in the Times of India dated the 24th December, 1994 under the caption "No arms for Pakistan" says Chernomyrden; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. From time to time there have been reports about Pakistan's interest in acquiring defence equipment from Russia. Our concerns in this regard have been brought to the attention of the Russian authorities who have assured us that these would be fully taken into account. During his visit to India in December 1994 Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin had publicly stated that Russia was not supplying arms to Pakistan and would not do so in future He also said that Russia's relations with Pakistan were transparent and were made known to India.

Acquisition of Nuclear Arms by India's Neighbouring Countries

2476. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is Government's information about the development of nuclear-weapons capability and acquisition of such weapons in Pakistan, Iran and other neighbouring countries; and

(b) what is Government's reaction thereto by way of raising competitive defence, improving the balance of power and maintaining peace in the Sub-continent?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government is aware of Pakistan's clandestine weapons-oriented nuclear programme. Government closely monitors all developments in the neighbourhood.

(b) The security situation of India remains constantly under review, particularly in the light of developments in the neighbourhood and Government will take all measures necessary to cope with any threat that may be posed to the security of the nation.

Indo-Bangladesh Relations

2477. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to improve bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what are the major hindrances in bilateral relations of the two countries and the efforts made to remove these hindrances; and

(d) what further steps have been contemplated by Government for the improvement of relations?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Government are engaged in a continuous dialogue with the Government of Bangladesh for early resolution of all outstanding issues in a fair and equitable manner.

Relations between India and Bangladesh are complex. There are commonalities of culture and ethnicity between the two countries. Given the geographical proximity, common borders, ethnic and linguistic similarities,